



United States Department of Agriculture

RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND ECONOMICS
AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE
www.ars.usda.gov

"Solving Problems for the Growing World"

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Announcement Number: ARS-X6W-0014
Demo/Alternative Merit
Promotion

Position Title/Series/Grade:

Research Leader (Interdisciplinary)
Supervisory Research Entomologist, GS-414-14/15
Supervisory Research Plant Pathologist, GS-434-14/15
Supervisory Research Plant Physiologist, GS-435-14/15
Supervisory Research Geneticist (Plant), GS-440-14/15

Employment Type: Full-time - Permanent

Grade and Salary Range:

GS-14 \$85,123.00 - \$110,662.00 Per Year
GS-15 \$100,129.00 - \$130,173.00 Per Year

Location of Position:

Horticultural Crops Research, Corvallis, OR

Who Can Apply: (You **must** include a statement in your application that you are a U.S. citizen to be considered for this position): All U.S. Citizens

Opening Date: October 24, 2005

Closing Date: December 30, 2005

For copies of vacancy announcements and/or application materials, please call (301) 504-1482. For additional information regarding employment opportunities, please visit <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/hrd/jobs/apply.htm>.

Contact Information

Human Resources Specialist:

Cindy Prucha
(301) 504-1581

Location Contact Information:

Andrew C. Hammond
(510) 559-6071

DC Relay Service: (202) 855-1234 (TDD)

Send Applications to:

USDA, Agricultural Research Service
Human Resources Division
Attn: ARS-X6W-0014
5601 Sunnyside Avenue, Stop 5106
Beltsville, MD 20705-5106

Fax: (301) 504-1535

E-mail: scirecruit@ars.usda.gov

Applications **must be received**, e-mailed or faxed by the closing date of the announcement. Applications received in Government envelopes will not be considered.

Please take advantage of the Application Package Checklist at the end of this announcement to ensure your application is complete.

For information about the organization and location, visit the location's website at:

http://www.ars.usda.gov/main/site_main.htm?modecode=53-58-10-00

Applications will also be accepted from USDA Surplus and Federal Displaced Employees in the commuting area.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

This position requires the selectee to undergo a pre-employment check and a full background investigation. Any offer made is considered a tentative job offer pending the outcome of the pre-employment check. Retention in the position is based upon a favorable adjudication of the background investigation. The incumbent will be subject to periodic reinvestigations.

Major Duties:

As the Research Leader for Horticultural Crops Research Unit, is responsible for leading and coordinating a team of research scientists with the objectives of improving the management, productivity, sustainability and environmental quality to solve problems affecting small fruit and nursery crop production in the Pacific Northwest. Additionally, is responsible for maintaining and enhancing scientific productivity and impact of the Unit; ensuring mission focus; managing human, fiscal and physical resources; and ensuring proper interpretation and reporting of research results and information. Personal research will apply scientific expertise to develop a coordinated research program in one of the following disciplines: 1) genetics, to develop new germplasm and varieties of small fruit crops important in the Pacific Northwest; 2) plant pathology, to control of diseases of small fruit or nursery crops; 3) entomology, to control arthropod pests of small fruit or nursery crops and to develop integrated pest management strategies; or 4) plant physiology, to identify traits and strategies to improve performance of small fruit or nursery crops during abiotic or biotic stress. Successful research will result in development of new genetic materials, new knowledge of the genetic diversity of small fruit crops and the inheritance of specific traits, new agricultural practices for biological and cultural control of pests and diseases as an integral part of sustainable agricultural production systems, new knowledge of diseases and arthropod pests of small fruit or nursery crops, and/or new strategies to enhance resistance to abiotic or biotic stress.

Qualifications Required: Education and experience will be evaluated against all qualification requirements (basic and any additional requirements) listed below. Applicants must have successfully completed a full 4-year course of study in an accredited college or university leading to a bachelor's or higher degree in one of the following disciplines; however, a Ph.D. degree is most preferable.

Basic Requirements

Entomology, GS-0414: a degree in entomology; or a related discipline of the biological or physical sciences that included at least 16 semester hours in entomology OR a combination of education and experience with courses equivalent to a major and at least 16 semester hours in entomology.

Plant Pathologist, GS-434: a degree in plant pathology or a related scientific discipline that included at least 20 semester hours in basic botany or plant science, and 10 semester hours in plant pathology.

Plant Physiologist, GS-435: a degree in botany or plant physiology; or a related scientific discipline that included at least 10 semester hours in plant physiology.

Geneticist (Plant), GS-440: a degree in genetics or one of the basic biological sciences that included at least 9 semester hours in genetics.

Since this position has a positive education requirement, you must provide a copy of your academic transcripts OR a list of college courses with credit hours, dates completed, and grades received to verify education when applying for this position. If this information is not provided, your education may not be appropriately evaluated, and you may lose consideration for this position. If you are selected for this position, you will have to provide an official copy of your transcripts prior to entering on duty.

Additional Requirements:

For the GS-14: One (1) year of specialized experience equivalent to at least the GS-13 level.

For the GS-15: One (1) year of specialized experience equivalent to at least the GS-14 level.

Specialized Experience - experience which has equipped you with the following Knowledge, Skills and Abilities - 'KSAs' required to perform the duties of this position:

- 1) Ability to apply research concepts, methods, and techniques of one of the relevant plant sciences or plant protection disciplines (horticulture, plant genetics, plant physiology, entomology, or plant pathology) to develop improved production systems for small fruit and/or nursery crops.
- 2) Ability to plan, conduct, lead, and document a scientific research project using appropriate experimental design, procedures, techniques, and statistical analyses that results in publication of written results in peer reviewed scientific journals.
- 3) Ability to establish research program goals and priorities to accomplish program objectives.
- 4) Ability to act as research liaison with scientists and officials of federal and state agencies, institutions, industry, farmers, and concerned individuals or groups.

Selective Placement Factor(s) - In order to be considered minimally qualified, you must also possess the following:

1. Ability to assess and manage human, fiscal, and physical resources.

Supervisory/Managerial Competencies - the following KSAs will also be used to evaluate candidates in the interview and selection process:

1. Ability to lead and accomplish work through others (i.e. team building, conflict management, cultural awareness, strategic thinking, technology management, and political savvy.)
2. Ability to communicate with individuals or groups from diverse backgrounds in a variety of situations.

To be considered for a research scientist position, you must submit a one-page abstract of your MS thesis and/or PH.D. dissertation. Also submit a list of names, addresses, and phone numbers of persons familiar with your stature, contributions, recognition; any honors or awards received; memberships in professional or honor societies; invitations to make presentations at scientific/technical meetings; scientific society office and committee assignments; presentations (other than invitation); and publications.

Vacant research positions may be filled at one of several grade levels depending upon the scientific impact of the person selected. A peer review may be required to determine the appropriate grade level of the position and supplemental materials may be required from the selectee.

Research scientists have open-ended promotion potential. Research accomplishments and their impact on the duties and responsibilities of positions are evaluated periodically. The grade level is limited only by the individual's demonstrated ability to perform research of recognized importance to science and technology. *Final grade level may be determined by a peer review panel.

Time-In-Grade Restrictions apply for all candidates considered under Merit Promotion/ Alternative Merit Promotion.

Other Important Information

Benefits Package:

A Benefits Package is authorized for this position. Additional information about Federal benefits can be obtained at www.usajobs.opm.gov/ei61.htm.

Veteran's Preference:

For further details, call the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) at 703-724-1850 or TDD 978-461-8404. Select General Information on the Federal Employment Policies and Procedures, and then Veterans Preference and Special Appointing Authorities for Veterans. Visit their VetGuide website at <http://www.opm.gov/veterans/html/vetguide.asp>.

Relocation Expenses:

Payment of relocation expenses will be determined in accordance with P&P 412.5, Recruitment and Retention Incentives and Other Special Pay, Sections 6 and 7, as amended by Bulletins 03-402 and 05-412.5, which may be found at <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/ppweb/412-05.htm#H10>. See also http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/hrd/staffing_recruit/reloweb.htm.

Financial Disclosure Requirement:

Federal employees are subject to prohibitions against officially dealing with outside organizations in which they have a financial interest. If hired for this position, you will be required to submit a financial disclosure report within 30 days of the effective date of your appointment and annually thereafter.

False statements:

If you make a false statement in any part of your application, you may not be hired; may be fired after beginning work; or may be fined or jailed.

Optional Form 306, (Declaration for Federal Employment):

If you are selected for this position, you will be required to complete this form before an offer may be made.

USDA Surplus/Federal Displaced Employees:

USDA Surplus/Federal displaced employees must submit documentary evidence of eligibility. Well qualified surplus and displaced employees within the local commuting area will receive selection priority as provided by OPM regulations. Well-qualified means the applicant meets the basic qualification and eligibility requirements and all selective placement factors; is rated above minimally qualified against the KSAs or quality criteria; and is able to satisfactorily perform the duties of the position upon entry. Applicants must submit the following:

- 1) a copy of your RIF Separation Notice or Certification of Expected Separation or other documentation indicating that you are a surplus employee;
- 2) evidence of full performance level of current position;
- 3) a copy of your most recent performance appraisal; and
- 4) a copy of your most recent SF-50, Notification of Personnel Action, to verify reassignment eligibility.

Status Applicants:

All status candidates who wish to be considered under both alternative merit promotion and non-status competitive examining must submit two (2) complete applications. When only one (1) application is received, it will be considered under the alternative merit promotion procedures if the applicant is a current or former Federal employee with reinstatement eligibility. All merit promotion principles remain in effect.

Selective Service System:

Males over age 18 who were born after December 31, 1959, must have registered with the Selective Service System (or have an exemption) to be eligible for Federal employment.

Reasonable Accommodation:

Reasonable accommodation is provided to applicants with disabilities. If you need a reasonable accommodation for any part of the application and hiring process, or have questions regarding reasonable accommodation and/or accessibility for any part of the application and hiring process, please contact the Disability Program Manager on 202-720-6161 or through the DC Relay Service on 202-855-1234 (TDD). The decision to grant reasonable accommodation is made on a case-by-case basis.

Civil Rights Policy Statement:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is an equal opportunity employer and provider. Discrimination is prohibited in all USDA programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's Target Center on 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call 202-720-5964 (voice and TDD).

Application Package Checklist

If application packages do not contain all of the requested information, you may lose consideration for the job. To help you ensure your application fully outlines your qualifications and eligibility for this position, please submit the following documentation.

- ☐ Optional Form 612 (Optional Application for Federal Employment), SF-171 (Application for Federal Employment), Resume, Curriculum Vitae, or other document outlining your qualifications (Go to <http://www.opm.gov/forms/html/of.asp> and scroll down to obtain the OF-612).

The following information is required of all applicants:

- ☐ Announcement number, title, and grade(s) of the position
- ☐ Full name, mailing address (including zip code) and day and evening phone numbers (with area code)
- ☐ Social security number
- ☐ Statement that you are a U.S. citizen (if not using the OF-612 or SF-171)
- ☐ Copy of DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty) if claiming veterans preference. Visit <http://www.opm.gov/veterans/html/vetguide.asp> for additional information.
- ☐ SF-15 (Application for 10-point Veteran's Preference) plus the support documentation required by this form (if claiming 10-point veterans preference) (Go to the web site at <http://www.opm.gov/forms/html/sf.asp> to obtain form.)
- ☐ Paid and non-paid work experience related to the position. For each period of work experience include:
 - ___ Job title
 - ___ Series/grade (if Federal employment)
 - ___ Duties and accomplishments
 - ___ Employer's name and address
 - ___ Supervisor's name and contact information
 - ___ Starting and ending dates of employment (at least month & year)
 - ___ Number of hours worked per week
 - ___ Salary
 - ___ Indicate if we may contact current supervisor/employer
- ☐ Other job related information, such as training courses (title & year); skills (e.g., other languages, computer software/hardware, tools, etc.)
 - ___ Certificates/licenses (current)
 - ___ Honors, awards, and special accomplishments
 - ___ Supplemental questionnaire if applicable (usually for Federal Wage System positions - WG, WL, WS)
- ☐ Copy of college transcripts (if qualifying all or in part on the basis of education for this position) (If you have non-conventional education, e.g., foreign study, continuing education units, life experience, etc., go to the web site at <http://www.opm.gov/qualifications/SEC-II/s2-e4.htm#e4a.asp> and look under the heading "Other Education" for information governing acceptability of this type of education.)

- ☐ Copy of SF-50 (Notification of Personnel Action) to verify possession of competitive civil service status (if you are a current or previous federal employee)
- ☐ Copy of most recent performance appraisal (if you are a current federal employee)
- ☐ Second copy of application package (if the position is open to candidates outside the federal government AND if you are a current federal employee or a candidate with reinstatement eligibility and wish to be considered under both merit promotion and competitive examining procedures).
- ☐ Support documentation for eligibility for special hiring authorities, such as disability, Peace Corps service, etc. (If you have questions about whether you are eligible for a particular hiring authority, please call the servicing HR specialist or visit the web site at <http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/htm/a2.asp> and scroll down to the subject heading, "Category".)
- ☐ Support documentation if you are a USDA surplus or federal displaced employee (See pertinent section under "Other Important Information" below.)
- ☐ Self-certification of typing speed (if required as a basic qualification for the position)
- ☐ While not required, a separate response to the required knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs listed under Specialized Experience) and Selective Placement Factor(s), if present, for this position may better highlight your specific qualifications for this position. (For an explanation of KSAs, go to the web site at <http://www.ars.usda.gov/careers/whatksa.html>).

As an Applicant for a Research Scientist Position, you must also submit the following:

A one-page abstract of MS thesis and/or Ph.D. dissertation

A resume of any honors or awards received; memberships in professional or honor societies; invitations to make presentations at scientific/technical meetings; scientific society office and committee assignments; presentations (other than invitations); and publications.

A list of names, addresses, and phone numbers of persons familiar with your stature, contributions, and recognition.

If this is your first time applying for a federal job, or if you wish to view more detailed information about various aspects of applying for federal jobs, go to <http://www.opm.gov/forms/html/of.asp> and scroll down to access the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Optional Form 510.